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Technical assistance

Note by the Secretariat

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I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to a decision taken at the twentieth session (1987) of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL),[1] technical assistance activities is one of its priorities. These activities promote awareness and adoption of the legal texts produced by the Commission and are particularly useful for developing countries lacking expertise in the areas of trade and commercial law covered by the work of UNCITRAL. Commercial law reform, based on harmonized international instruments, has a clear impact on the ability of enterprising persons in all States to participate in international trade which plays an important part in achieving sustainable development and social stability. The technical assistance activities of the Secretariat can thus contribute to the economic integration efforts of developing countries.

2. This note lists the activities of the Secretariat subsequent to the date of the previous note submitted to the Commission at its thirty-eighth session in 2005 (A/CN.9/586 of 1 April 2005), reports on the development of resources to assist technical assistance activities and indicates possible future activities.

II. Texts of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

3. Through its mandate to prepare and promote the use and adoption of legislative and non-legislative instruments in a number of key areas of commercial law, including sales; dispute resolution; government contracting; banking, payments and insolvency; transport; and electronic commerce, UNCITRAL plays an important role in developing the legal framework for international trade and investment. Those instruments are widely acceptable, offering solutions appropriate to different legal traditions and to countries at different stages of economic development.

4. Those instruments include:

(a) In the area of sales, the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods[2] and the United Nations Convention on the Limitation Period in the International Sale of Goods;[3]

(b) In the area of dispute resolution, the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards[4] (a United Nations convention adopted prior to the establishment of the Commission, but actively promoted by it), the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules,[5] the UNCITRAL Conciliation Rules,[6] the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration,[7] the UNCITRAL Notes on Organizing Arbitral Proceedings,[8] and the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Conciliation;[9]

(c) In the area of government contracting, the UNCITRAL Model Law on Procurement of Goods, Construction and Services,[10] the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Privately Financed Infrastructure Projects[11] and the UNCITRAL Model Legislative Provisions on Privately Financed Infrastructure Projects;[12]

(d) In the area of banking and payments, the United Nations Convention on International Bills of Exchange and International Promissory Notes,[13] the

UNCITRAL Model Law on International Credit Transfers,[14] the United Nations Convention on Independent Guarantees and Standby Letters of Credit[15] and the United Nations Convention on the Assignment of Receivables in International Trade;[16]

(e) In the area of insolvency, the UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency[17] and the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Insolvency Law;[18]

(f) In the area of transport, the United Nations Convention on the Carriage of Goods by Sea (Hamburg Rules),[19] and the United Nations Convention on the Liability of Operators of Transport Terminals in International Trade;[20] and

(g) In the area of electronic commerce, the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce,[21] the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Signatures[22] and the United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts.[23]

III. Technical assistance to law reform

5. In its resolution 60/20 of 23 November 2005, the General Assembly reaffirmed the importance, in particular for developing countries, of the technical assistance work of the Commission in the field of international trade law and reiterated its appeal to the United Nations Development Programme and other bodies responsible for development assistance, such as the World Bank and regional development banks, as well as to Governments in their bilateral aid programmes, to support the technical assistance programme of the Commission and to cooperate and coordinate their activities with those of the Commission.

6. In the same resolution, the General Assembly stressed the importance of bringing into effect the conventions emanating from the work of the Commission to further the progressive harmonization and unification of private law, and to this end urged States that have not yet done so to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to those conventions. The UNCITRAL Secretariat is prepared to provide technical assistance and advice to States considering signature, ratification or accession to UNCITRAL conventions, as well as to States that are in the process of revising their trade legislation.

7. Technical assistance activities undertaken by the UNCITRAL Secretariat include: organizing briefing missions and seminars and participating in conferences to familiarize participants with UNCITRAL texts and their use; undertaking law reform assessments to assist governments, legislative organs and other authorities in developing and other countries to review existing legislation and assess their need for law reform in the commercial field; assisting with the drafting of national legislation to implement UNCITRAL texts; assisting international development agencies, such as the UNDP and the World Bank, to use UNCITRAL texts in their law reform activities and projects; providing advice and assistance to international and other organizations, such as professional associations, organizations of attorneys, chambers of commerce and arbitration centres, on the use of UNCITRAL texts; and organizing group training activities to facilitate the implementation and interpretation of modern commercial legislation based on UNCITRAL texts by judiciaries and legal practitioners.

A. Technical assistance activities

8. Participation by the UNCITRAL secretariat and experts in the following technical assistance activities to promote the use and adoption of UNCITRAL texts and in some instances to assist with drafting the enacting legislation was financed by the Trust Fund for UNCITRAL Symposia:

(a) Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro (18-19 June 2005), seminar on insolvency law held in cooperation with the European Centre for Peace and Development of the University of Peace (12 participants);

(b) Beijing, China (28-30 June 2005), international workshop organized by the University of Science and Technology and the Beijing Municipal Congress to consider new draft legislation on privately financed infrastructure projects (60 participants);

(c) Cairo, Egypt (12-13 September 2005), participation at the regional conference "25 Years United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (100 participants);

(d) Singapore (22-23 September 2005), participation at the regional conference to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods and the 20th anniversary of the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration (180 participants);

(e) Minsk, Belarus (13-14 October 2005), UNCITRAL seminar on the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (110 participants);

(f) Seoul, Republic of Korea (27 October 2005), UNCITRAL seminar on international trade law organized by the Ministry of Justice and the Korean International Trade Law Association (100 participants) and Cheju Island, Republic of Korea (29 October 2005) international trade law conference organized by the Korean International Trade Law Association and Cheju National University (130 participants);

(g) Geneva, Switzerland (31 October-4 November 2005), symposium organized by the UNCTAD/WTO International Trade Centre on "Multilateral trade treaties and developing economies—improving working methods and enhancing national regulatory frameworks" (60 participants);

(h) Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt (19-21 November 2005), international conference organized by the Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration on "The Vital Role of State Courts in Arbitration" (150 participants);

(i) Bratislava, Slovakia (23-24 January 2006), First Inter-Governmental Mediation Workshop organized by Conflict Management International and the Government of the United Kingdom (45 participants);

(j) Bogota, Colombia (27-29 March 2006), international seminar on insolvency and procurement sponsored by UNCITRAL, the Bogota Chamber of Commerce, the Colombian Foreign Office, INSOL International, the Colombian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Universidad del Rosario and Universidad Externado de Colombia (300 participants).

9. Participation by the UNCITRAL secretariat and experts in the following technical assistance activities was financed in part by the Trust Fund for UNCITRAL symposia and in part by the co-organizer:

(a) Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia (27-29 July 2005), participation at international forum on commercial law organized by the Chamber of Industry, Commerce and Services (80 participants);

(b) Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (6-11 August, 2005), lectures on UNCITRAL at the XXXII Course of International Law for the Inter-American Juridical Committee of the Organization of American States (45 participants);

(c) Chiang Mai, Thailand (26-28 September 2005), workshop on insolvency and secured transactions law organized in conjunction with the Office of Justice Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Thailand for Viet Nam, Cambodia, Myanmar and Lao People's Democratic Republic (43 participants);

(d) Cotonou, Benin (21-23 February 2006), participation at UNCTAD/WTO International Trade Centre seminar on the participation of Benin in multilateral trade treaties (25 participants);

(e) Cairo, Egypt (22-23 March 2006), Fourth United Nations Forum on Online Dispute Resolution, held under the auspices of the Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration and in collaboration with the Center for Information Technology and Dispute Resolution, University of Massachusetts, United States of America, the United Nations Expert Group on ODR, the Minister of Communications and Information Technology, the Arab League and UNCITRAL.

10. Participation of members of the UNCITRAL secretariat in the following activities where UNCITRAL texts were presented for examination and possible adoption or use was financed either by the organizers, another organization or in some cases, partially or totally, with resources from the United Nations regular travel budget:

(a) Presentations on the work of UNCITRAL for the International Trade Law postgraduate course sponsored by the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Institute of European Studies (Turin, Italy, 5 April 2005);

(b) Symposium on recent developments concerning Unidroit, Loyola University (New Orleans, United States of America, 5-9 April 2005);

(c) Conference on "Tendencies in International Security Interests Law" (Bern, Switzerland, 6 May 2005);

(d) Meeting of the Unidroit Committee of Governmental Experts on the preparation of a draft convention on harmonized substantive rules regarding securities held with an intermediary (Rome, Italy, 9-20 May 2005);

(e) Workshop on international commercial law standards in Oman organized by the Commercial Law Development Program of the Department of Commerce, United States (Muscat, Oman, 10 May 2005);

(f) Meeting to discuss finalization of World Bank Reports on Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC) methodology on insolvency and creditor rights (Washington, United States of America, 31 May-2 June 2005);

(g) 8th biennial International Federation of Commercial Arbitration Institutions (IFCAI) conference on "Tendencies in International Security Interests Law" (Washington, United States of America, 3-4 June 2005);

(h) WTO workshop on accession to the Agreement on Government Procurement (Geneva, Switzerland, 5-8 June 2005);

(i) Presentation on arbitration and e-commerce organized by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH (Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro, 15 June 2005);

(j) African and Arab Regional Conference on Electronic Transaction Security—Digital Signature and PKI (Tunis, Tunisia, 19-23 June 2005);

(k) Lecture on the United Nations Convention on the Carriage of Goods by Sea, 2005 International Summer Academy (Internationaler Verband der Tarifeure) (Sopron, Hungary, 23-24 June 2005);

(l) 60th Anniversary of the Great Victory, the United Nations and International Law (Moscow, Russian Federation, 26-29 June 2005);

(m) Assembly of Member States of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) (Rome, Italy, 28 June 2005);

(n) Working Group for the preparation of a new law on arbitration and mediation (Ljubljana, Slovenia, 31 August-2 September 2005);

(o) 7th UN/CEFACT Forum (Lyon, France, 24-29 September 2005);

(p) Presentations on procurement and the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods, 2005 International Bar Association Regional Conference (Prague, Czech Republic, 26 September-2 October 2005);

(q) Annual meeting of the Slovenian Lawyers Association group considering legislative issues on conciliation/mediation and arbitration (Portoroz, Slovenia, 14-16 October 2005);

(r) 99th session, ECE Working Party on Road Transport (Geneva, Switzerland, 16-18 October 2005);

(s) Presentation on the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Insolvency Law for the New York Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Program "International Insolvency: What you need to know about representing multi-national companies" (New York, United States of America, 28 October 2005);

(t) Meeting between UNCITRAL, Unidroit, the Hague Conference on Private International Law, the IMF and the World Bank on potential coordination of technical assistance work (Washington, United States of America, 1-2 November 2005);

(u) Seminar on security interests, University of Tokyo Law School; briefing for the Ministry of Justice on the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods; seminar on security interests for the Bank of Japan (Tokyo, Japan, 1-2 November 2005);

(v) Panel presentation on the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Insolvency Law for the 79th annual meeting of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges (San Antonio, United States of America, 3-4 November 2005);

(w) Conference to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (CISG), University of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, United States of America, 4-5 November 2005);

(x) UNCTAD Advanced Seminar on Managing Investment Disputes, (Washington, United States of America, 3-11 November 2005);

(y) Conference "Paris, Place de Droit" on the convergence of legal systems (Paris, France, 15-17 November 2005);

(z) Presentation on the United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communications in International Trade, World Society of Information Systems parallel event (WSIS) (Tunis, Tunisia, 16-18 November 2005);

(aa) Finnish Arbitration Association seminar (Helsinki, Finland, 25 November 2005);

(bb) Conference on development of legislation on international commercial arbitration organized by the Committee on International Affairs and Inter-Parliamentary Relations of the Legislative Chamber of the Parliament, the Cabinet of Ministers, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan and the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in cooperation with UNDP (Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 4-7 December 2005);

(cc) Symposium organized by ICSID, OECD and UNCTAD on investment protection arbitration (Paris, France, 11-13 December 2005);

(dd) Coordination meeting with Unidroit and the Hague Conference on Private International Law (The Hague, The Netherlands, 14 December 2005);

(ee) Lecture on UNCITRAL's work in electronic commerce, International Development Law Organization (Rome, Italy, 16-19 December 2005);

(ff) Seminar on transport documents, rights of suit and time for suit in relation to the preparation of a draft convention on the carriage of goods [wholly or partly][by sea] organized by the Italian delegation to UNCITRAL Working Group III (Transport) (London, UK, 23-24 January 2006);

(gg) 2nd session of the Unidroit Advisory Board on the preparation of a model law on leasing (Rome, Italy, 5-8 February 2005);

(hh) Round Table discussion on draft legislation on mediation sponsored by the International Finance Corporation and Ministry of Justice (Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 10 February 2006);

(ii) Colloquium organized by the *Journal de Droit International* on interim measures in arbitration (Paris, France, 12-14 February 2005);

(jj) Consultations at the request of UN/ECE on a draft Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) protocol to the CMR Convention (Brussels, Belgium, 27 February-2 March 2006);

(kk) Lectures on electronic commerce for the University of Bologna (Bologna, Italy, 27 February-3 March 2006);

(ll) Conference of the Academy of European Law on Cross-Border Security for Credit (Trier, Germany, 9-10 March 2006);

(mm) Conference on Judicial Strategies for the Application of Egyptian E-signature Laws organized by the Commercial Law Development Program, United States Department of Commerce (Cairo, Egypt, 8-9 March 2006).

11. The use and adoption of UNCITRAL texts has also been promoted through contact with Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Vienna, Geneva and New York, as well as directly with relevant officials in some States. In particular, the Secretariat has been actively promoting adoption of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods.

12. Members of the UNCITRAL secretariat have also conducted or participated in a number of activities in Vienna, including:

(a) Presentation on UNCITRAL activities for the Suomalainen Lakimiesyhdistys (Finnish Law Society) (8 April 2005);

(b) Presentation on UNCITRAL activities for students from The Dickinson School of Law, Penn State University, United States (18 July 2005);

(c) Presentation on UNCITRAL activities for judges from the Korean National Judicial Research and Training Institute (25 July 2005);

(d) Participation in a seminar on financial sector regulation and selected financial transactions organized by the IMF Legal Department and the IMF Institute (22 March 2006).

13. The UNCITRAL secretariat has provided assistance from Vienna with legislative drafting and other advice in many instances, including the following:

(a) China: advice on draft legislation on privately financed infrastructure projects for the municipality of Beijing;

(b) Georgia: advice on a draft Arbitration Act, based on the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration;

(c) Greece: advice on draft legislation on cross-border insolvency based on the UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency;

(d) Macedonia: advice on a draft law on conciliation based on the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Conciliation;

(e) Malaysia: advice on a draft Arbitration Act, based on the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration;

(f) Peru: advice regarding revision of the law on arbitration;

(g) Rwanda: assisting the International Law Institute with the drafting of commercial legislation for Rwanda (from March 2006);

(h) Serbia: assistance with drafting a Law on Mediation (from 2004 and ongoing);

(i) Slovenia: advice on arbitration and conciliation legislation;

(j) Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization: assistance with drafting arbitration and conciliation rules for a dispute resolution centre (from December 2004);

(k) Economic Commission for Europe: advice on the TIR Convention;

(l) European Commission: technical comments on the United Nations Convention on Assignment of Receivables in International Trade in the context of the Convention on the Law Applicable to Contractual Obligations (Rome I).

14. Since the last session, a number of additional activities were organized around the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods and the 20th anniversary of the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration, including in Egypt, Singapore and Pittsburgh, United States of America as noted above in paragraphs 8 and 10. Proceedings of the event held in Vienna in March 2005 have been published as a special number of the Journal of Law and Commerce.

B. Technical assistance resources

15. A number of publications and documents prepared by UNCITRAL serve as key resources for its technical assistance activities, particularly with respect to dissemination of information on its work and texts. These resources are being developed to further improve the ease of dissemination of information and ensure that it is current and up to date.

(a) CLOUT

16. The Commission may wish to note the continuing work under the system established, pursuant to a Commission decision in 1988, for the collection and dissemination of case law on UNCITRAL texts (CLOUT). The system consists of the preparation of abstracts of court decisions and arbitral awards relating to UNCITRAL texts, compilation of the full texts of those decisions and awards, as well as of the preparation of research aids and analytical tools. As at the date of this note, 54 issues of CLOUT had been prepared for publication, dealing with 604 cases, relating mainly to the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods and the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration.

17. The Commission may also wish to note that an updated CLOUT search engine is being developed in order to facilitate retrieval of published case law on the UNCITRAL website.

18. CLOUT continues to be an important tool of the overall training and technical assistance activities undertaken by UNCITRAL and the wide distribution of CLOUT in both paper and electronic formats, in all of the six official languages of the United Nations, promotes the uniform interpretation and application of UNCITRAL texts by facilitating access to decisions and awards from many jurisdictions. A number of arbitration centres worldwide have expressed their willingness to cooperate with the Secretariat in order to publish awards on UNCITRAL texts in both the CLOUT system and the Digests.

19. The Digest of Case Law on the United Nations Sales Convention, published in December 2004, is being reviewed in order to improve its uniformity in approach and style. The first draft of the digest of case law relating to the Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration is in the process of being finalized and will be published soon.

(b) Website

20. In June 2005, the Secretariat launched a redesigned website. The website, available in the six official languages of the United Nations, contains all UNCITRAL documents currently available in the United Nations Official Documents System (ODS), as well as other information relating to the work of UNCITRAL.

21. The number of visitors to the UNCITRAL website has increased threefold since the launch of the new website. About half of the traffic is directed to pages in English, one quarter to pages in French and Spanish, and the remaining quarter to pages in Arabic, Chinese and Russian.

22. The website is being continuously expanded with new tools. Envisaged future additions include pages specifically designed for technical assistance and dynamic components, such as, for instance, a search engine for CLOUT cases (see above, paragraph 16).

23. The Secretariat has also initiated a major exercise, with the assistance of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in New York and the United Nations Library in Geneva, to digitize all official documents of UNCITRAL issued since the establishment of the Commission. The digitized documents will be uploaded in the ODS and links to those documents will be made available on the UNCITRAL website.

(c) Library

24. The UNCITRAL Law Library was established in 1979 in Vienna. Since its establishment, the Library has been providing services not only to UNCITRAL delegates and to the staff of the Secretariat, but also to the staff of permanent missions and the staff of other Vienna-based international organizations. It has also provided research assistance to scholars and students from many countries.

25. The collection of the UNCITRAL Law Library focuses mainly on international trade law and currently consists of over 10,000 monographs; 150 active journal titles; legal and general reference material, including non-UNCITRAL United Nations documents, and documents of other international organizations; and electronic resources (restricted to in-house use only). Lately, particular attention has been given to expanding the holdings in all of the six United Nations official languages.

26. The UNCITRAL Law Library maintains an on-line public access catalogue (OPAC) jointly with the other United Nations libraries in Vienna and with the technical support of the United Nations Library in Geneva. The OPAC is available via the library page of the UNCITRAL website.

(d) Publications

27. UNCITRAL traditionally has two series of publications, in addition to official documents, which include the texts of all instruments developed by the Commission and the UNCITRAL *Yearbook*.

28. The Secretariat has developed a new visual identity (see UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Insolvency Law and UNCITRAL *Yearbook 2002*) to be used for both hard copy and electronic publications, with increasing focus on the latter. A new book providing basic facts about UNCITRAL, which will include a CD-ROM of all UNCITRAL texts, will be published in 2006.

(e) UNCITRAL Yearbook

29. Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 2421 (XXIII) of 18 December 1968, UNCITRAL has, since its inception, issued a *Yearbook* with the aim of making its work more readily available. The UNCITRAL *Yearbook* is currently published in both hard copy and CD-ROM in 4 languages (English, French, Spanish and Russian) and includes all working papers and Commission documents issued in a particular year, as well as summary records for those parts of the annual session of the Commission devoted to consideration and finalisation or adoption of a legislative text.

30. Over the last few years, the steady increase in UNCITRAL's work has meant a corresponding increase in the size of the *Yearbook* and delays in publication have occurred. The last edition published was the English version of the 2002 *Yearbook* (hard copy and CD-ROM), which was approximately 700 pages. The increased size of the *Yearbook* has also led to escalating costs, particularly with respect to the printed version.

31. The Commission may wish to note that the Secretariat will adopt the following approach with a view to reducing the costs of publishing the *Yearbook* and achieving more timely publication. The Commission may wish to comment on these issues.

(i) Simplify the procedures for collating and editing the documents. The current approach requires all documents to be collated and edited so that, for example, footnotes are consecutive throughout the *Yearbook* and references are consistent between different papers. This could be simplified so that the *Yearbook* would appear more as a collection of documents in the form in which they were originally issued (e.g. as a working paper or Commission document), thus saving on editing, additional translation and typesetting. This approach might also facilitate making the *Yearbook* available in Chinese and Arabic;

(ii) Encourage distribution of the *Yearbook*, including to depositary libraries, on CD-ROM only. It might be technically feasible to produce a single CD-ROM containing all language versions of the Yearbook.

(f) Information

32. To improve the availability of up to date information on the status and development of UNCITRAL texts, efforts have been made to ensure that press releases are issued when treaty actions are taken or information is received on the

adoption of a model law. Those press releases are provided to interested parties by email and are posted on the UNCITRAL website, as well as on the website of the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) in Vienna.

33. The Secretariat currently addresses approximately 1500 general inquiries per year concerning, inter alia, technical aspects and availability of UNCITRAL texts, working papers, Commission documents and related matters. Increasingly, these inquiries can be answered by reference to the UNCITRAL website.

IV. Extrabudgetary funding

(a) UNCITRAL Trust Fund for symposia

34. In the period under review, contributions were received from Mexico and Singapore, to whom the Commission may wish to express its appreciation.

35. The ability of the Secretariat to implement the technical assistance component of the UNCITRAL work programme is contingent upon the availability of extrabudgetary funding, since the costs of technical assistance activities are not covered by the regular budget.

36. The UNCITRAL Trust Fund for symposia supports technical assistance activities for the members of the legal community in developing countries; participation of UNCITRAL staff, as speakers, at conferences where UNCITRAL texts are presented for examination and possible adoption; and fact finding missions for law reform assessments in order to review existing domestic legislation and assess country needs for law reform in the commercial field.

37. The Commission may once again wish to appeal to all States, relevant United Nations Agencies and bodies, international organizations and other interested entities to make contributions to the Trust Fund, if possible in the form of multi-year contributions, so as to facilitate planning and to enable the Secretariat to meet the increasing demands from developing countries and States with economies in transition.

(b) UNCITRAL Trust Fund to grant travel assistance to developing countries members of UNCITRAL

38. The Commission may wish to recall that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/32 of 9 December 1993, the Secretary-General was requested to establish a Trust Fund to grant travel assistance to developing countries that are members of UNCITRAL. The Trust Fund so established is open to voluntary financial contributions from States, intergovernmental organizations, regional economic integration organizations, national institutions and non-governmental organizations, as well as to natural and juridical persons. In the period under review, no contributions were received.

39. In order to ensure participation of all Member States in the sessions of UNCITRAL and its Working Groups, the Commission may wish to reiterate its appeal to relevant bodies in the United Nations system, organizations, institutions and individuals to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund established to

provide travel assistance to developing countries that are members of the Commission.

40. It is recalled that in its resolution 51/161 of 16 December 1996, the General Assembly decided to include the Trust Funds for UNCITRAL symposia and travel assistance in the list of funds and programmes that are dealt with at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

V. Future activities

41. Since the last report on technical assistance activities (A/CN.9/586 of 1 April 2005) the Secretariat has focused, inter alia, on the development of a work programme for its expanded technical assistance functions.

42. In this context, the Secretariat will hold a meeting with Permanent Missions in Vienna in April to brief member States on the objectives and planning of technical assistance and to strengthen the links with the Permanent Missions in Vienna so as to be able to quickly identify future legal assistance needs and requirements in various regions of the world. The Secretariat is also exploring the possibility of enhancing partnerships with other United Nations agencies and international organizations in order to further improve its capacity-building activities.

43. Finally, the Secretariat is considering the opportunity to develop a capacity-building programme on selected UNCITRAL instruments focusing on developing countries and countries in transition to enhance local capacity to master and apply UNCITRAL texts.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/42/17), para. 335.

[2] 11 April 1980, United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1489, p. 3; *Official Records of the United Nations Conference on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods, Vienna, 10 March-11 April 1980* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.V.5), part I.

[3] *Official Records of the United Nations Conference on Prescription (Limitation) in the International Sale of Goods, New York, 20 May-14 June 1974* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.V.8), part I; United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1511, pp. 77 and 99; UNCITRAL *Yearbook 1980*, part three, chap. I, sect. C.

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 330, No. 4739.

[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/31/17), para. 57; UNCITRAL *Yearbook 1976*, part one, chap. II, sect. A.

[6] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/35/17) chap. V, sect. A, para. 106; UNCITRAL *Yearbook 1980*, part three, chap. II.

[7] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/40/17) Annex I; UNCITRAL *Yearbook 1985*, part three, chap. I.

[8] UNCITRAL *Yearbook 1996*, part three, chap. II.

[9] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/57/17), Annex I; UNCITRAL *Yearbook 2002*, part three.

[10] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/49/17), Annex I; UNCITRAL *Yearbook 1994*, part three, chap. I.

[11] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.V.4, A/CN.9/SER.B/4.

[12] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/57/17), annex I.

[13] UNCITRAL *Yearbook 1988*, part three, chap. I; General Assembly resolution 43/165, annex.

[14] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/47/17), annex I.

[15] New York, 11 December 1995, United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2169, p. 163; *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/50/17) annex I.

[16] UNCITRAL *Yearbook 2002*, part three; General Assembly resolution 56/81, annex.

[17] UNCITRAL *Yearbook 1992*, part three, chap. I.

[18] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/59/17), para. 55.

[19] Hamburg, 31 March 1978 United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1695, p. 3; *Official Records of the United Nations Conference on the Carriage of Goods by Sea, Hamburg, 6-31 March 1978* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.VIII.1), document A/CONF.89/13, annex I.

[20] A/CONF.152/13, annex.

[21] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/51/17), annex I.

[22] Ibid., *Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/56/17), annex II.

[23] New York, November 2005, General Assembly resolution A/RES/60/21, annex.